

To Age a Dragon

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Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Adventure, Family

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, Valka

Status: Completed

Published: 2014-07-22 08:52:28

Updated: 2014-07-22 08:52:28

Packaged: 2016-04-26 20:04:52

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,798

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Hiccup needs a break from running the village, so he takes a flight to relax. (Set after HTTYD2, One-shot)

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There was a sudden snap, black leather wings pulled close, tight to his body. The next moment, head down, the dragon plunged down and down, falling, falling, faster and faster. The low hum of wind through his tail-fin turned to the familiar high-pitched shriek as his mouth opened, ready, filling with high-pressured gas. There was a triumphant explosion as a bright flash of fire shot forth, straight towards the target, violent, destroying it in a flash of bright violet.

A thump echoed as the dragon's wings shot out once again, swooping, the edges flapping and snatching the air. He was pressed into the saddle by the force of the movement. His dragon gave a roar of victory, his wings thrusting strongly back up into the clouds. Hiccup glanced back over his shoulder at the boat, rocking back and forth in the water, it's decks black from use as a target. The shield-like disk painted in bright red and yellow was completely destroyed, disappeared from the deck.

"Alright! Great shot, bud!" Hiccup congratulated his dragon. Toothless gave a gentle hum, glee written all over his face. In a lithe movement, he levelled out at the cloud layer, allowing his friend to reach up and touch the cotton-soft strands. The new chief was overwhelmed with the feeling of wanting to try it again, or to try his flight-suit out again. Anything to take his mind off the pressure of being chief.

He lay back across Toothless' spine, sighing and closing his eyes, slipping his helmet off his head to reveal his pale skin and shock of red hair. "I knew it would be hard, but never like this!" He complained, rubbing his head, which was beginning to ache. "Every

time I think I've sorted one thing, another thing comes up that's even worse than the last! I don't know how my dad used to cope!" There it was again; the ache in his chest. He felt it every time he thought about his father. It wasn't like it used to be, of course, not a crippling, overwhelming sadness, just a dull ache that seemed to make things just a little bit darker.

There came a sudden dragon-screech that made him sit up and listen, alert. Toothless, too, became tense, the ear-like growths atop his head standing up on end as he listened. There it was again, that scream, familiar and yet distant. The young man frowned.

"Hiccup!" His mother's voice floated to him over the wind. His heart jumped.

"Mother!" He replied, standing up in the saddle. Toothless gave a shriek.

"Hiccup! There you are!" Valka and her dragon were suddenly beside him, Cloudjumper's two sets of wings pounding together in time. He warbled quietly, pressing his owl-like face towards his friend. Toothless growled playfully, pawing at him in greeting.

"I just needed a break, mum!" The chief sighed, flopping back down onto his back. "Cheifing is hard!"

"I know, dear." Valka replied calmly.

"And every time I solve one problem, another seems to come up and hit me!"

"Yes, I know..."

"You know, this morning, Hoark and Phlegma were having an argument about who's weapons were who's! I mean, you'd expect them to have some sort of an idea..."

"Hiccup, listen." His mother smiled kindly. "I know it's not easy. It's never easy. But you will get the hang of it, and I'm always here to support you with anything you need. Cloudjumper and I can run little errands if you need us to."

"The thing is, I don't want you to. I don't want to have to ask you for help when I could do it myself. It's not your job to run around after me."

"I know, but that's what mother's do..." She found herself looking away from her child's curious gaze. "Or, at least, they're supposed to." Their eyes met. "I have to make it up to you somehow, son. All those years alone, they weren't fair either, so don't you worry. Take advantage of my help while I'm offering it."

"Thanks, mum..." The two dragons flew on in silence for a long while, Cloudjumper closing his eyes occasionally to better feel the air currents around him. His long tail twisted ever-so-slightly with every tiny adjustment, his wings hardly beating. Toothless was watching him curiously, great, green eyes glittering.

Valka looked across to her son, who's brow was furrowed, deep in thought, scowling at his dragon's neck. Taking a deep breath, she

carefully gathered her legs beneath her, leaning on one hand, sitting as she might to relax in a meadow on a summer's day, so content was she upon her dragon's back. Finally, she pushed herself upright, lifting her arms to the wind.

"What are you thinking about, my son?" She asked quietly. Hiccup looked across at her, his train of thought wholly disrupted.

"I, uh... I've been thinking about something you said a long, long time ago. I remembered it in a dream I had a few nights ago." He felt slightly bashful under her grinning, encouraging look. "When you met us, the very first time, you were stroking Toothless and you said 'I've never seen a Night Fury this close before'"

"Oh, that wasn't so very long ago, was it?" Valka laughed at this, both dragons looking up at the tinkling, shimmering sound.

"It feels like a long time ago..." Hiccup found himself smirking softly. "But right after that, you told me that Toothless was my age... How could you know? If you'd never seen one before, then..."

"Ah, I thought you might ask about this," His mother nodded knowingly. "Just because I hadn't seen one up close, didn't mean I hadn't seen one at all..."

\_It wasn't long after I was taken that I saw that dragon for the very first time. Though it was small and black, hardly eye-catching, it commanded a certain respect from the other dragons, though also a certain distance from them. It lived close to our nest in an old mountain cave. Both myself and Cloudjumper tried to tempt it from the dark depths with offerings of food and kindness, but nothing worked. It just would not accept us as friends. In the end, we had no choice; we had to abandon our quest. The dragon would not be tamed. I still kept an eye on it, though, up in its solitary little cave. It would come out to fish every day, then just go back to the cave again.\_

\_I felt like there was more to it than just an antisocial dragon, so one day, when it had left its cave, Cloudjumper and I went to investigate. I wasn't surprised to find a little egg in there, sitting in a big, sparkling nest, woven with tree branches and peppered with sparkling gems; Quartz and Fools Gold, maybe even a little copper. Just shining in that glorious structure, bold as brass. I don't think I'd ever seen a more beautiful sight. \_

\_Then I heard my dragon making a fuss behind me and knew it must be time to leave. We got out of there as fast as the wind, avoiding the Night Fury mother, who by now had eaten her fill and was returning. She probably smelt us at her entrance, but when she found her egg undisturbed, she must not have found any cause for worry. She didn't leave very often anymore, though; just a quick dive off the cliff for fish and then back up she went. \_

\_It was when I was observing her that I noticed those little growths under her chin. She had about four each side, like Toothless does. I thought little of it until her baby hatched and he had only the big ears and the smaller flaps beneath them. I spent ten years observing that mother and baby, mostly the baby, though, for that was a particularly hard winter and the mother perished trying to catch food. I still wish we could have helped her, could have brought her

into our home, but alas, it was not to be. The spring came and I didn't see the baby for about a week. I thought the poor thing was dead as well, but alas, there he was, sitting on the ledge when I came back to remove his body. \_

\_He was teetering on the edge, I remember, his little wings fluttering and his little bottom wagging as he tried to find his balance. Then, all of a sudden, he pitched over the edge, tumbling towards the sea. There was a heart-stopping moment when he flipped over and looked like he wouldn't recover, but then, he twisted about, just like a cat, and his wings opened up and he zoomed up into the air like a little dragon bullet. \_

\_I watched him grow and grow and grow. He was bigger than Toothless, I'd say, with big amber-green eyes. He flew around and around, simply living where he was born. 10 years, he was there. 10 years, I watched him. Then, soon enough, he was gone. Just gone, one day, flying away into the sunset.\_

"I noticed those bits on his chin grew around one every 5 years or so, starting with that lowest big flap at the edge of his jaw and continuing along his chin. That's how I knew how to age your lovely dragon." Valka reached out to touch Toothless' broad shoulder, smiling as she finished her tale.

"That's just incredible!" Hiccup breathed softly, in awe. "You never stop surprising me, mum."

"Och, well, I could say the same about you, my son!" She laughed jovially, placing a hand on her stomach and smiling broadly. "Now, if I remember, we have a wee problem to sort, you and I, eh? Why don't we get back to Berk and find your chieftain's legs again?"

With a resigned sigh, he lay back across his dragon's back once again, staring into the deep blue of the sky. Then, he jolted upright, standing in his stirrups and slamming his helmet back onto his head. "I'll race you there!" He cried, before Toothless snapped about and pounded off in the opposite direction, ducking and diving between clouds.

Valka held back for a second, watching her son disappear between walls of white silk. "I'm glad he found us, Cloudjumper. I don't know how I survived twenty years without him." Snapping out of her reverie, she sat forward on her Stormcutter's shoulder and grinned. "Come now, we can't let him win that easily. Go, Cloudjumper! After him!"

\_Valka is pretty awesome. I really like her, and I hope to see more of her in the last film, or perhaps the next series of Dragons. Also, I can't get enough of that beautiful Cloudjumper. Such an awesome dragon!\_

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file.